

NEW HAMPSHIRE BOARD OF FIRE CONTROL
MEETING, MARCH 19, 2014
9:30 AM
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
110 SMOKEY BEAR BLVD
CONCORD, NH 03305

Attendees: Allan Clark, Floyd Hayes, Richard Heath, Norman Skantze, J. William Degnan, Brian Boudreau, John Ela, Martin Michaelis, Dan Andrus and Jon Osgood from Building Code Review Board

Absent: William Mead

Meeting Called to Order at 9:33 am by Richard Heath.

A motion was made by John Ela to approve December 18, 2013 meeting minutes. It was seconded by Allan Clark. All approved.

Report of State Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal's office has had a bad start to the year. From January 1, 2014 to March 19, 2014 there have been eight fire deaths and three CO deaths. There has been an increase of contents (hoarding) inside of homes hindering the search for occupants in several cases and there needs to be further education to inform the public to the hazards of keeping their pathways blocked in case of an emergency.

There were three deaths in Plaistow due to CO poisoning from a disconnected vent pipe. A third occupant is still in serious condition. It was suggested that furnaces should have a built in sensor that would activate if CO backs up when not vented properly. This case is still under investigation.

There were 7 deaths which were accidental and 1 was intentional.

Director Degnan informed the board of a plan to seek funding to purchase a “real time” reporting system for each fire department in New Hampshire called Fire Bridge which works the same as the EMS reporting system called TEMPSIS.

This program will make it easier for all fire departments to enter their incidents and have it recorded immediately. As well as reduce cost to the departments. EMS currently uses this type of program and the switch to the fire bridge would be very user friendly.

If fire departments are using another reporting program and want to keep that program, they do not have to change. This is one way to reach out to all departments to aid in NFIRS reporting. This program is currently working very well in western states including Minnesota.

There are several advantages to using this program. First, in disaster situations the department can look at the reports within one to two days and determine if improvements can be made for these situations. Second, are there trends that each community is experiencing to determine how to save money or to find ways to help their communities with education on problem areas? The State Fire Marshal’s office would be able to make these determinations as well and be able to better assist each fire department.

There were some concerns regarding internet access in some areas of the North Country. It was suggested that areas that do not have internet access could seek alternative access such as local libraries, schools, police departments or industry to use the computers there. The time frame for reporting will not change and will remain as it now stands at 15 days after the following month however the system will have the capability to provide the information immediately upon entry.

On May 13-14th there will be a Haz Mat workshop in Meredith for continuing education and planning for the future of handling hazmat situations. There is no cost for the two day seminar. Rooms are available at Church Landing at the seminar rate. Lunch and breaks are provided. All are welcome to attend. Applications went out to all the communities two weeks ago.

HB 137 was enacted 2 years ago and the law designates the FMO as the building official when the community does not have an enforcement mechanism per state statutes. This law only applies to commercial buildings. The concerns communities who do not have building inspectors and where the Fire Marshal's office would step in and be the AHJ. This does not apply to one and two family residential construction. The law also requires the contractor in these communities to notify the SFM of the pending construction.

How are building inspectors selected? It depends on the towns and their administration. They may be voted in or assigned. The Fire Marshal's office has the authority to mandate a third party inspection if needed and the expense would be passed onto the property owner developer.

Old Business

The final approval of the bfc 100-200 Board of Fire Control Organizational Rules are in and the board took a vote. Dan Andrus made a motion to accept the rules, Norm Skantze seconded the motion. All approved and Richard Heath signed the acceptance form to be given to JLCAR and the rules now stand as stated in bfc 100-200.

In the last meeting in December the board decided to keep the State Fire Code edition the same as the Building Code Review Board. The board agreed that it was easier to review and make changes every 3 years instead of the 6 years proposed earlier. Jon Osgood from BCRB stated that their board was appreciative of the Board of Fire Control's support concerning both codes.

Director Degnan stated that fireworks related rules, enforcement and licensing may be coming over to the Fire Marshal's office from the Division of State Police. This change will provide better customer service to the fireworks community and one stop shopping for the local communities with fireworks questions or needs.

When there are changes to the NFPA codes they will provide a training session along with providing updated books at no cost to the AHJ. Very informative and they are thorough in their training materials.

Legislative Reports

This has been a good year for bills. The sky lantern bill (SB 403) was killed. The only way you could use them is to have them tethered and unable to become free. The lanterns can be sold in New Hampshire but must be tethered. There was an incident in Rye where a wedding was held on the beach and the party let off the sky lanterns and many of the nearby residents complained about debris and charred sections in their yards and houses. There have been several complaints across the state.

HB 1241 was killed and has no value.

SB 315 was amended and passed the Senate. This bill was created to establish a board to certify building officials for each community. They are looking at 2015 for this bill to go into effect.

There was some discussion regarding affordable housing in New Hampshire. There seems to be a shortage and a group is studying the needs for ways to make affordable housing available. There needs to be a balance.

HB 1356 relative to fire department plates was killed.

HB 1265 the director was unsure of the status at this time.

HB 1229, the director is monitoring this bill regarding clean up fund for gas or oil discharge

HB 1222, prohibiting commercial use of law enforcement and fire fighters memorials, this will be monitored.

HB 1130 ought to pass with amendment. This bill is in regards to fire service and retirement

HB 1114 limits on school building aid. This bill is being monitored by the Fire Marshal

HB 498, the director is monitoring this bill. This is concerning gunpowder storage around proximate audiences at military, veterans or national holidays concerning reloading gunpowder ammunition and the storage of gunpowder.

SB 233 ought to pass. This bill is regarding property tax exemption for mutual aid systems.

SB 226, Electrical Board requirements for continuing education allowances. Just recently voted and approved by the BCRB.

HB 1132 school building security. The goal was to have school inspection reports available to school officials to monitor the conditions of the schools in their districts.

HB 1489, this bill covers establishing a fund to cover cancer causing agents to fire fighters at fire scenes and whether they are related or not. Fire fighters are covered for heart and lung issues but cancer is a new area being discussed.

SB 334, this bill covered the issue of mold and how to regulate the problems created from mold. Director informed board that the Fire Marshal's office will not be the ones selected to enforce regulation. This is a licensing issue and it should fall under the NH Joint Board or Environmental Services.

The director mentioned he received an inquiry regarding legalizing marijuana in the state and who would enforce the building and fire codes relative to control of growing, cultivating, distributing and what chemicals to be used. This would be the normal enforcement local process at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

NASFM Activity

The board received handouts regarding green building and WPI grants news in Massachusetts.

Fire Safe Cigarettes have been attributed to a 30 year low in smoking material fire deaths in Massachusetts as well as other states across the country.

Updates on NFPA 921 were discussed regarding Insurance on Arson control for all investigators including private investigators. The fact that this issue is being discussed will be beneficial to all involved. This NFPA document gets better each year with good discussion among all involved.

The director mentioned that he has been working closely with PHMSA on the transport of crude oil and its dangers. Many of these units are being transported by rail, trucks throughout the New England area and many communities do not know the contents going through their region.

Bill Degnan announced that he will be in Florida the end of July for the NASFM Conference and his two year term as the current president is ending. After his term, he stated he will be remaining active with the NASFM.

The director brought in a new smoke detector called NEST which is used as both a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector which has a battery life of 10 years. It also is capable of communicating with your smart phone to let you know when your battery is low. If you have more than one unit in your home they can also talk to each other and it can light up the area if there is a fire so you can get out safely.

In the past three years the technologies of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors have made changes for the better.

The board discussed the vacancies on the list of board members. The Fire Marshal has reached out to several organizations to have two positions filled but has not been successful in finding people for these positions. He asked if anyone knew of a qualified, citizen of New Hampshire who may be interested in either of these two positions to let him know.

There was some discussion of the difference of natural gas and compressed natural gas. This is a product that is being used in the New England states more than other areas in the country. The trucks are able to carry more product due to the compression and it is less expensive than natural gas.

A motion was made by Norm Skantze to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Dan Andrus.

All approved.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.

Next meeting will be held on June 18, 2014